

'EXCUSE US FOR WINNING' ..but Israel is not ready to commit national suicide

RECOIL not merely at George Gale's distortion of the facts, but at his odious comparison between Israel and Nazi Germany.

Making his attack behind the old smoke-screen that some of his best friends are Jews—or Israelis—in no way mitigates its damage and offensiveness.

The Nazis, in cold blood, tortured, gassed to death and burned in incinerators, 6,000,000 Jewish men, women and children.

They were innocent people whose only crime in Nazi eyes was their race or religion.

Israel, which provided a home for the pitiful survivors from these horrors, wants no more than to live in peace with her Arab neighbours.

Short

All nations have done things they would rather forget, but nothing in Israel's history can even be mentioned in the same breath with the bestialities of Nazism.

The analogies to "thieving children" and "Hitler's Germany" are as grotesque as they are irresponsible.

George Gale has a short memory as well as an unfortunate turn of phrase when he refers to "Israel's aggressive blitzkrieg."

Why compare Israel's war with the Nazis at all except as a smear?

No, Mr. Gale, Israel has not tortured, nor gassed 6,000,000 Arabs.

No, she didn't even start the war. It started because Nasser:

- Massed 100,000 troops in Sinai.
- Threw out the UN peace force.
- Blockaded Israel's lifeline port of Elath.

And on May 25, Radio Cairo declared "the Arab people is firmly resolved to wipe Israel off the face of the earth."

Thirteen Arab countries joined together for the extermination of Israel—delicately, King Feisal later changed the word to elimination.

ISRAEL has not, in the word of Mr. Gale, "stolen" Sinai, Gaza and the West Bank.

The facts are that Sinai is not historically part of Egypt, Gaza was part of Mandatory Palestine and so was the West Bank.

It was Jordan (then Transjordan)

which "stole" Old Jerusalem which never belonged to them.

They took it (together with the West Bank) as spoils of war in 1947, and annexed it two years later in direct violation of a United Nations resolution, which said that the city should be under international control with free access to all.

Jordan held on to Jerusalem for nineteen years and during this time, no Jews were allowed to visit their holy places, many of which were desecrated.

The fact is that on June 5 Jordan made a pathetic miscalculation. She need never have been in the war at all.

If King Hussein had acted on Israel's plea to keep out of it, he would still be ruling the West Bank and old Jerusalem. Instead, he threw in his lot with Nasser and attacked Israel, misled by Cairo into believing that Egypt would win. But Israel won (a book has just

been published there called "Excuse Us for Winning") and in the course of the fighting, occupied enemy territory.

Now what does George Gale want Israel to do with this land? His answer: "Let them return what they have stolen."

Eager

Putting aside the offensive language, is he suggesting that the Israelis hand it all back to the Arabs so that they can have yet another try at wiping Israel out?

Israel, given the right—peaceful overtures from the Arab states, is ready, indeed eager, to display magnanimity. They are not ready to commit national suicide.

Israel has repeatedly said that if the Arabs are willing to sit down and discuss peace, she is ready to trade territory against a fair settlement.

The only exception is Old Jeru-



by WILLIAM FRANKEL

EDITOR OF THE JEWISH CHRONICLE

"Let Israel show now that Israel is made of better stuff than Hitler's Germany. Let them return what they have stolen."

From all over Britain came angry protests from Jews.

The Mirror today prints, in full, a reply to Gale's views. It comes from Mr. William Frankel, distinguished editor of the Jewish Chronicle, and it expresses the distress felt by the Jewish community in this country.

Also on this page: a selection of readers' letters on the subject.

years, despite numerous Israeli offers to discuss solutions.

While Israel was resettling Jewish refugees (many of them from Arab countries), the Arabs showed little concern for humanity.

They recognised the value of the refugees as a political weapon—and exploited them by keeping them in squalor in the camps.

To resettle them was to give up a stick with which to beat Israel.

Not to mention these facts in the context of so provocative an article is to be guilty of flagrant distortion by omission.

As an editor, I would be the last to try to suppress free speech, but, as I understand free speech, it must involve a respect for all the facts, not just those skillfully selected for special pleading.

Shocked

George Gale is "shocked at the brutality of post-war Israeli behaviour," yet offers no evidence for this serious allegation.

But it should be noted that the Director of the UN Refugee Service to Gaza said last month, "the Israeli army has been treating the Arab refugees in Gaza with kid gloves."

We all want to make allowances for the shocked, humiliated Arabs. But the Israelis, after recovering from their almost miraculous deliverance are also shocked with the realisation of what might have happened.

When war broke out, all Israel's hotels were mobilised as hospitals.

Open spaces and parks were consecrated for the burial of the expected mass civilian dead.

What the Arabs would have done to the Jews had they occupied Israel can safely be left to the world's—and George Gale's—imagination.

To put it kindly, perhaps Gale has allowed a natural British sympathy for the underdog to undermine his judgment.

I'm sure he wants peace in the Middle East as much as Israel. But he doesn't help by using invective instead of facts, assertions rather than argument.

He has perpetrated a smear all the more dangerous because of the vast circulation of the Daily Mirror.

He would do better to urge the Arabs to talk peace rather than encourage them in their hatred.

He must also know that there are those who will rejoice in his ill-chosen words and use them as fuel to inflame bigotry and prejudice.

I CAN'T SUPPORT GEORGE GALE

VIEWPOINT

In a recent visit to Israel I saw no evidence of what George Gale called "the brutality of post-war Israeli behaviour."

I visited the holy places of the three great religions and saw Jews, Moslems and Christians at worship and in complete charge of their own shrines.

For twenty years, from Jordan's capture of Old Jerusalem in 1948, Jews were denied access to the Old City.

Yet I do not recall George Gale making any plea as synagogues were deliberately destroyed and

Jewish cemeteries desecrated and used as latrines.

I cannot support George Gale or George Brown in their desire to divide Jerusalem. — H. Sebag-Montefiore, London, W.C.1.

GEORGE GALE has a short memory. Four months ago Israel was threatened with annihilation and the rest of the world did nothing to defend her.

She has earned the right to sit tight and make her own peace with the Arabs. — (Mrs.) A. Elman, Harrow, Middx.

GEORGE GALE says: "Let Israel show it is made of better stuff."

Why are the Jews—traditional victims of the pogrom—always expected to be more humane, more super, more human than the rest of us? — (Mrs.) N. Edwards, London, S.E.5.

PEACE will only be re-established in the Middle East when the Arabs show the same tolerance to the Jews as the Jews have shown to Moslems and Christians living in Israel. — G. Cameron, London, S.W.17.

IF the Israelis also took through blood-coloured spectacles when making policy decisions, it is because of the recently shed blood of the Israelis who died to prevent a second Auschwitz on the shores of the Mediterranean. — K. R. London, N.W.1.

MY reaction to the article: Rubbish! With the exception of Jerusalem, Israel has time and again stated that she has no desire to hold on to the territories she has gained, provided she can get a guaranteed peace by direct negotiation with the Arabs.

Who can deny her that right? — J. Samuels, Stanmore, Middx.